

*The blessed State of those that live and
die in CHRIST,*

A
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the
D E A T H
O F A

Young G E N T L E M A N,

Who departed this Life *December* the 3^d, 1753.

Preached at the Request of his surviving Relations,

December the 11th, 1753.

By J O S E P H P I C C O P.

Of Loveclough, in LANCASHIRE.

The SECOND EDITION.

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THE BRITISH MUSEUM

December 1871

BY JOSEPH L. COLE

OF THE

THE SECOND EDITION

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R E V E L. xiv. 13.

And I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, write, blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours; and their Works do follow them.

HEREIN is a wonderful Display of the Kindness and Condescension of an infinitely wise and gracious God, who is well acquainted with our Weakness, want of Faith, and those many slavish and servile Fears we are so frequently attended with, especially when we should approach the Presence of God in his more solemn Worship and Service; and herein is shewn forth the wonderful Love of God, that he ordinarily brings his People into the Valley, to plead with them there, and to shew them their own Insufficiency, in order that he may take them into the Mount to shew them his Excellency; and he thus deals with them, that Self may be debased, and Grace exalted, both in laying the Foundation and top Stone of the Salvation of all those who are his adopted Children: A wonderful Discovery of which Grace we have made manifest in the Case of *John* the Divine, who is the Person in the Text that was so highly favoured of God; not only with such clear Views of God's peculiar Care over his People in all the Circumstances in Life, but he likewise, by a Voice from Heaven, witnessed to by the Spirit, sets forth the blessed State of those, and of those only, that die in Jesus, and in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses every Thing shall be established; therefore, for the Confirmation of this Soul-reviving

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Truth,

Truth, here is both the Word of God and the Testimony of the Spirit ; from which, note, that our Lord Jesus leads his People gradually, as it were, Step by Step; first he opens one Part of his Counsel, and then another ; and thus he manifested himself to his Servant *John*, as we have an Account in the foregoing Part of the Chapter, *For he looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Sion* ; from which observe the wonderful Condescension of our exalted High Priest, who, as God-Man and Mediator is set down on the Father's Right Hand, as equal Sharer with him in his Godlike Glory, expecting 'till his Enemies be made his Footstool. Yet, when he unveils his Face to Man, while in this lower World, he looks still like a Lamb that had been slain from the Foundation of the World, and thus he still stands on Mount Sion as the Head and Representative of all those that shall be Heirs of Glory; many of which are yet wandring in this waste howling Wilderness, and often groaning under the Hidings of his Face, but *his Eye is still upon them that fear him; on those that hope in his Mercy, to deliver their Soul from Death, and to keep them alive in Famine*, Psal. xxxiii. 18, 19. Thus *John* saw him on Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's Name written in their Foreheads : These were such as came out of great Tribulation, which Christ had purchased by his Blood, and purified by his Grace, and brought home to Glory as the first Fruits to God and the Lamb. This is the first Discovery that Christ makes to *John* in this Chapter, of those First-Fruits that he had gathered in; but he doth not leave him here without a further Testimony of his Love and Faithfulness, in carrying on the Means by which he accomplisheth his own Work, in the Calling and Conversion of Sinners, and in edifying and building up his People on that sure Foundation, Himself. And in order hereto, another Angel flying in the Midst of Heaven, with the greatest Expedition, to bring the glad Tidings

ings of Salvation down to them that dwell on the Earth, saying, *Fear God, and give Glory to Him*: And no sooner was this View, as it were, passed, but another Angel followed as an Herald, to make Proclamation of the wonderful Success of the Gospel; it being the Means that the Lord makes use of to bring the haughty Spirit of Man low: From which, note, that the Angels do not only rejoyce to see the Sons of God brought home to Glory, but they likewise rejoyce to see Sin and Idolatry decay, and the Gospel and the Grace of God therein revealed gain Ground; and herein is shewn forth God's tender Care over his People, that even in the Midst of heavy Judgments he still exerciseth his Mercy and Loving Kindness to them; nay, they are so dear and precious to him, that he cannot go out in the Way of his Judgment against his Enemies, till he have sealed his Servants in their Foreheads.

Oh! what a Favour is it to be a Member of such a Body, who hath that Lamb on Mount Sion for its Head, who hath favoured his Servant *John* with such a three-fold Discovery? First, of his Glory both in his Person and Excellency: Secondly, of the glorious State of those that are with him on Mount Sion; and, Thirdly, the Care that he hath over, and towards his, when his Judgments are in the Earth; an evident Token of which Care the divine *John* was here favoured with in a wonderful Manner, in giving him such clear Views both of his Glory in his Exaltation, and the glorious State of those that are with him; but now, having by this Means fitted him for what he had further to make known unto him in the Words of the Text, at last breaks Silence, in order to set forth the happy State of those that die in Jesus, who, while in this Life, are tossed with many Temptations and Exercises, according to Christ's own Words, *John xvi. 33. In the World ye shall have Tribulation, but be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World*; and

that Victory which Christ hath gained, is so made over to his People, that they are made more than Conquerors through him, that hath so loved them, as to lay down his Life for them, that by his Death be so far freed from Death, as that while it executeth its Office in breaking the Union between the Soul and the Body, it only answers the End of a Door or Gate, thro' which, those that die in Jesus, pass from a World of Sorrows to that Heaven of endless Joy, where they shall rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them; not as the Cause of God's Love to them, but as the Evidence of their Love to him, in whom all their chiefest Blessings are treasured up; *Col. i. 19. For it pleased the Father that in him should all Fulness dwell*, who now, with an audible Voice from Heaven, saith, write, that what I am now declaring of the blest State of those that die in Jesus, may be left upon Record for the Benefit of my chosen in after Times, that they may be fitted to meet that grim King of Terrors, with an undaunted Courage, knowing that it hath lost its Sting in the Side of him who once suffered on the Cross as a Malefactor, and was buried in the Grave as a Prisoner, but now stands, at the Head of that glorious Company, as our all-sufficient Conqueror, and is continually handing down Blessings every Way suited to our various Necessities, both for our Comfort in Life, and our Support under the Pains, and to strengthen us against the Fears of Death, which in some Respects we are all our Life-time in a Kind of Bondage to; yet it is thro' this Valley of the Shadow of Death that all the redeemed Ones pass to the Enjoyment of the eternal Inheritance; and by Virtue of their Union with Christ in an everlasting Covenant, are ranked amongst those glorious Hosts; who died in Jesus, and now live and reign with him for ever and ever; perfectly free from all their Labour and Toil; and what will add to their everlasting Joy and Rejoicing will be, that he in whom they

they died once, died for them, and now lives among them, and they shall live with him, *John xiv. 19. Because I live, ye shall live also.*

And Oh! what a glorious Privilege is it to be made a living Member of that Body of which Christ is the living, and ever-living Head of Influence, by whom all that are the Workmanship of the Father, created anew in him, live, move, and have their Being, both for Time and Eternity; and by virtue of their Union with him, are made Partakers of those Blessings pronounced in the Text, *that they rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.*

Thus much as an Introduction. I now come to a more distinct Handling of the Doctrines contained in the Words, in which I intend to proceed as follows, which is to shew,

First, That none can truly and properly be said to die in Christ, but those who truly live in him.

Secondly, To shew what it is to die in Christ.

Thirdly, That Death, to such as die in Christ, is an End of all their Trouble and Sorrow.

Fourthly, To shew wherein their Blessedness consists that die in Christ.

Fifthly, To shew how, and for what End, their Works follow them.

Sixthly, That our only Support under the Pains, and our Comfort against the Fears of Death, flow from our Union with Christ.

First, That none can truly and properly be said to die in Christ, but those who truly live in him.

In the Improvement of this Proposition I shall *First* shew, How every believing Man and Woman are in Christ;

Christ; and then Secondly, shew, What it is, to live in Christ.

And *First*, They are virtually in him by an eternal Act of Choice, *Ephes. i. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy and without Blame before him in Love*; from which, note, that they who are thus chosen in Christ, and by virtue of that are in Covenant Union with him, are no more deserving any Favour at the Hand of the Lord, than those that are left to perish in their Iniquity; for he did not set his Love upon them, nor choose them on the Account of any foreseen Faith, or any other Excellency that was either in, or should be done by them, but merely as an Act of his own good Pleasure, that we should be to the Praise of his Glory, *Ephes. i. 6. Wherein he made us accepted in the beloved*. From which observe, that those who are thus, as it were, implanted into Christ by the Hand of the heavenly Father in the Act of eternal Election, as the Objects of the everlasting Love of God; are, by that one eminent Act in God, brought into a Covenant Relation to Jesus Christ, and may thus, by virtue of their Relation to Christ, be truly and properly be said to be in Christ: But again, observe, that he that chose them in Christ to Salvation, as the End next to his own Glory, hath likewise unalterably fixed the Means, whereby he will magnify his Grace, in bringing them to the full Enjoyment of that Glory, which he hath prepared for them from the Foundation of the World; as, *2 Epist. to Thess. ii. 13. We are bound to give Thanks unto God always for you, Brethren, beloved of the Lord; because God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth*; from which it appears that God, at one eternal View, beheld all the Objects of his Love: *First*, As the most noble or glorious Piece of his Workmanship, as they came out of his Hand;

Hand as Creatures; *Gen. i. 31. And God saw every Thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good.*

Again, at the same Time with, or in that one eternal View, he beheld Man as he had unmade himself by Sin, as cast out into the open Field, wallowing in his Blood, and none of all the Creation could afford him any Relief; as the Lord saith by the Prophet *Ezek. xvi. 8. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy Time was the Time of Love.* From which observe, that at that Time there being no Loveliness in the Creature, God, in his eternal Counsel, saw it was the fittest Time to manifest his Love, which bore Date from Everlasting: By which it appears, that no Deformity in the Creature could ever take the least Effect or Impression on the eternal, all comprehending Mind of the eternal Jehovah, so much as once, in any Respect, in the least, to change his Purpose towards those who were from everlasting the Objects of his Love: And no Motive besides that Love, which is essentially in himself, could in the least move or induce him to take any of *Adam's* fallen Race into so near a Relation to himself; and it was from that Love that he gave his Son a Saviour to lost Sinners, *Mat. i. 21. He shall save his People from their Sins:* And thus are all the Elect, virtually in Christ, by an eternal Act of Choice.

And then, *Secondly*, They are in Christ by Spiritual Implantation, *John xv. 5. I am the Vine, ye are the Branches:* From which it appears, that those that are in Christ are set forth in the Nearness of their Relation to him, under the Similitude of a Vine and Branches, to shew forth both the Nearness and Reality of their Union with him.

But again, *Eph. ii. 10. For we are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them;* and therein it appears that the Work of Regeneration is by the Apostle set forth by a new Creation; *2 Epist.*

to Cor. v. 17. *Therefore, if any Man be in Christ he is a new Creature, old Things are past away, behold all Things are become new:* And in order to the more perfect Accomplishment of this new Creation-Work, our Lord Jesus Christ *hath abolished in his Flesh the Enmity, even the Law of Commandments, contained in Ordinances, for to make in himself, of Twain, one new Man, so making Peace,* Eph. ii. 15. In which Work, those that were Dead in Sin, and in that Circumstance lay under the Curse of the Law, are by him made Partakers of that Spiritual Life which flows from Christ the living Head, to every Member of that Body, by which they are brought out of a State of Nature into a State of Grace, out of the Bondage of Corruption into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, *John viii. 36. If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* 1 Epist. of John iii. 1. *Behold, what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God.* And thus the Nearness of our Relation to Christ is further set forth, in that, those who are created anew in Christ are called the Sons of God; and Christ as the first-born of every Creature so freely owns the Relation, in that he is not ashamed to call them Brethren; as *Heb. ii. 11. For both he that Sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one; for which Cause he is not ashamed to call them Brethren, saying, I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren.* In which it plainly appears, that by Spiritual Implantation, they that are born again of the Spirit are really in Christ Jesus.

And then, Thirdly, they are in him by effectual Vocation; 1 Epist. Cor. i. 9. *But God is faithful, by whom ye were called to the Fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.* Thus it appears, that by Nature, all Men are Enemies in their Minds by wicked Works; and that all that are brought to Christ effectually, are brought in at this Door of Regeneration, and are furnished with fresh Supplies of Grace; out of that Fulness the Father hath laid up in him; by which they
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are daily strengthened to follow him, both in the Exercise of every Grace, and the Discharge of every Duty in the strength of Christ, walking worthy of the Vocation wherewith they are called, in Sincerity and godly Simplicity, as Children of Light.

And then, *Secondly, What it is to live in Christ.* Now, in order to living in Christ, there must be a dying to all Things; and this the Apostle affirmeth, *Gal. ii. 19.* where he saith, *I through the Law, am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God.* From which, observe, he was dead to the Law, as a Covenant of Works, so as that he did not look for Life by it; neither did he look for Justification by the Works of the Law; nor was he under the Curse of the Law, Christ having been made a Curse for him, that he might free him, and every one of the Objects of his Love from the Curse of the Law: And thus all that are in Christ are become dead to the Law, that they might live unto God.

And again, as Christ was crucified for Sin, so they, by the Power of his Grace, are crucified to Sin, so as they can take no Delight therein; that Principle of Spiritual Life, which they have received from Christ, still shewing its Dislike against Sin, speaks this Language in the Heaven-born Soul, *How shall I do this Wickedness and Sin against God?*

And again, as Christ was crucified in the World, so they that are in him are crucified to the World; as the Apostle hath said, *Gal. vi. 14.* *But God forbid that I should Glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.* Thus the Apostle saith, *Gal. ii. 20.* *I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the Life that I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Thus, truly and properly to live in Christ, is,
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first, to receive Life from him ; and then, by vertue of that Life, to act Faith upon him, who is the proper Object of saving Faith. Thus the true Christian, in the Exercise of that Faith, which is of the Operation of God, is daily sucking spiritual Life and Consolation from Christ the living Fountain, in whom we live, move, and have our Being ; that Life which is in Christ flowing freely forth to all that are Christ's. So that as Christ the living Head hath Life in himself, he is not wanting to give Life to all his, *John xvii. 2. Thou hast given him Power over all Flesh, that he should give eternal Life to as many as thou hast given him.* And as he gives Life, so he maintaineth that Principle of Spiritual Life in the Soul, in a daily Increase of that Grace of Faith ; and in the Exercise of Faith, the believing Soul still draws fresh Life from Christ ; for it is the Nature of that Life that is from Christ, to draw the Soul that is possesst of it, to Christ, for fresh Supplies : Therefore, to live in Christ, is still to act Faith on him, according to his Word : When all our present Enjoyments decline, it is a living on Christ indeed, if when all our outward Comforts are gone, we can in Faith say, Lord, thou hast taken away a near and comfortable Enjoyment, but yet thou hast left me thy Self, and in thee I have all other Losses made up : As in the present Case now under Consideration, thou hast taken away an only Son, in whom the Mother's Life seemed to be bound up ; Art not thou better than ten Sons ? *What tho' the Fig-tree shall not blossom, and there shall be no Fruit in the Vines, the Labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yield no Meat, the Flocks shall be cut off from the Folds, and there shall be no Herd in the Stall: Yet will I joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of my Salvation, Hab. iii. 17, 18.* That Man or Woman may truly and properly be said to live in Christ, who can, in the Exercise of Faith, under all outward Crosses and Disappointments whatsoever, with *Job,* patiently sit down in Faith and say, My heavenly Father

ther saw I was just ready to make an Idol of such a Comfort, and therein to forget him; and therefore, he saw meet to strip me of it, that he might leave me nothing to trust to but himself: *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the Name of the Lord.* Thus I have briefly shewn what it is to live in Christ.

Secondly, What it is to die in Christ.

We have the Apostle in the First Chapter to the *Hebrews*, giving us a large Account of the Excellency of that Grace of Faith in all those Worthies, whose Faith is there recorded, in that, in the way of believing, they were carried thro' all those Difficulties in Life, and at last through the Pangs of Death: These all died in Faith, not having received the Promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded, and embraced them. From which observe, that to die in Christ, is to die in that Faith, which Faith, first believeth him to be the Son of God. *John iii. 16. God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting Life:* Therefore, to believe savingly in Christ, is, not only to assent to the Truth of what is declared of him in the Word; but to have the Word made over to the Soul, and witnessed by the Spirit, to support it under all its fainting Circumstances. *I had fainted unless I had believed to see the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living, Psal. xxvii. 13.* And again, *The Spirit itself beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God: And if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 16, 17.* From which, note, that to die in Christ, is to die in the Faith of our Union with him; being joined to him in a perpetual Covenant, that can never be dissolved; which Covenant, and the Blessings of it, were *David's* Support when he expressed his last Words, *2 Sam. xxiii. 5.*

Although my House be not so with God ; yet hath he made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all Things and sure : For this is all my Salvation and all my Desire, although he maketh it not to grow.

But again, to die in Christ, is likewise to die in Fellowship with him : Now, Fellowship with Christ, is the Believers Support both in Persecution in Life, and at the Hour of Death. 1 Epist. John i. 3. *And truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* Thus the Children of God, while in this Life, have Fellowship with Christ in his Sufferings ; as he suffered for them, so they suffer with him. Rom. viii. 17. *If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.* And again, Phil. i. 29. *For unto you it is given in the Behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his Sake.* Phil. iii. 10. *And the Fellowship of his Sufferings, being made conformable to his Death.* Thus as Christ past thro' the Gates of Death, that he might free his People from Death ; so all his have Fellowship with him in this Respect ; that as he by dying, overcame him that had the Power of Death, and ascended as a glorious Conqueror, to take Possession of that eternal Inheritance ; so all that die in him, must follow him the same Way ; and none can follow him, but such as have Fellowship with him. From hence observe, what a glorious, what an invaluable Blessing it is, to have Fellowship with Christ ; for when they walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, he, as their Fellow-traveller the same Way, bears them Company, and hath drank of that bitter Cup for them, and by so doing, hath made it rather desireable than dreadful to those who are truly in him ; as appears in the Case of old Simeon, Luke ii. 29, 30. *Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace, according to thy Word ; for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation.*

But again, to die in Jesus, is to die in Submission to his Will in every Respect, whether it be for Life or Death ;

Death; 1 Sam. iii. 18. *And he said, it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* Psal. xxxix. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth, because thou didst it.* From which it very plainly appears, that the more any Soul is in Fellowship with Christ, the more Submission to his Will, yea, though he seem to write bitter Things against them; as in the Case of *Hezekiab*, when the Lord sent a Messenger to warn him, to set his House in Order, for thou shalt die and not live: This was an uncomfortable Message, to the fleshly Part, in that good Man, for he turned his Face to the Wall and prayed unto the Lord; and it appears that the Lord's Ear is always open to hear the Prayers of his People, which are put up unto him in Faith, with Submission to his Will; and he will return an Answer when he sees will be best for his People: And thus he answered *Hezekiab's* Prayer; and in the receiving an Answer of which, he said, *Isa. xxxix. 8. Good is the Word of the Lord.* How excellent a Favour then is it to be blessed with Humility, and Submission to the Will of God, both in Life and Death? For the Grace of Humility was very wonderful in the Case of *Job*, who, when he was under the greatest Afflictions, and Death, just as it were looking him in the Face, yet, in the most submissive Manner could say, *Job xiv. 14. All the Days of my appointed Time will I wait, till my Change come.*

And again, we find the Prophet *Micah* personating the Church of Christ in *Israel's* Afflictions, saying, *I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, till he plead my Cause, and execute Judgment for me, then will he bring me forth to the Light, and I shall behold his Righteousness,* Micah vii. 9. Thus God manifests himself to the humble Soul, declaring it is his Delight to dwell with him that is of an humble and contrite Spirit, and trembleth at his Word.

But again, to die in Christ, is to die in Love with him; as *Revel. xii. 11. And they loved not their Lives unto*

unto the Death; Love to Jesus Christ in them being stronger than Death; so that in the Exercise of that Grace of Love in them, as a Stream flowing from God's everlasting Love to them, they have a Desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better, knowing, that while they are at home in the Body, they are absent from the Lord; And they that thus die in Love to him, when Death hath done its Office, shall be eternally with him, where he is, to behold his Glory.

Thirdly, That Death, to such as die in Christ, is an End of all their Trouble and Sorrow.

The Life of a Christian, is a Life of Sorrow: *Job v. 7. Yet Man is born to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upwards.* From which, note, That Trouble attends a Man's Birth, and Troubles are his continual Companions through his whole Life; for no sooner is Man entered into Life, but his Trouble begins in Crying, and through all the Changes of an uncertain Life, he passeth on his Time, sometimes toiling and sometimes complaining: So that his whole Life is a Scene of Cares and Complaints, as it were, toiling in the very Fire, for very Vanity; spending his Money for that which is not Bread, and his Labour for that which satisfieth not: And at last, he leaveth the World with groaning: While here, he many times groaneth under outward Crosses and Disappointments in his secular Affairs, and he sometimes groaneth under bodily Pain and Sicknes; and at other Times, he groaneth under a Sense of the Punishment that is due unto him, as the Wages of Sin, which is Death: And at last, groaneth heavily under the bitter Pangs of Death; till that King of Terrors open a Door in his Body, to let out an immortal Soul; fulfilling the Words of the wise Man, *Eccl. xii. 7. Then shall the Dust return to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit to God that gave it.*

And now, to them that die in Christ, Death is an End of all these Troubles. And First, As their Trou-

Troubles begin in Crying, so to them that are in Christ they end in Dying, *Rev. vii. 17. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them to Living Fountains of Waters: And God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes.* Thus, to them that die in Christ, there is an End of Weeping, and the Hand that shall wipe them away, is so soft, that in wiping away their Tears, both Cause and Effect is for ever done away; and neither Sin nor Sorrow shall any more disturb the Breast of those that have laid down their dying Head in the Bosom of a living Jesus, and are set down with him on his Throne; even as he overcame, and is set down with his Father on his Throne. But again, as there is an End of their Crying, so there is an End of their Complaining: *Isa. li. 11. Therefore the Redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting Joy shall be upon their Heads: They shall obtain Gladness and Joy, and Sorrows and Mourning shall flee away.*

But again, as their Life, while here, was a Life of Warfare and Toiling, yet then, even when they leave this dusky Stage, their Enemies will then be entirely overcome, *Isa. xl. 2. Her Warfare is accomplished; their Enemies are all destroyed: For the last Enemy that shall be destroyed is Death.* But again, as this Life is often a Life of Groaning; that Life will be a Life of Praising: *Isa. lxi. 3. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them Beauty for Ashes, the Oil of Joy for Mourning, the Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness, that they might be called Trees of Righteousness, the Planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.*

Again, they that are united to Christ, while here, are often tossed with sore Temptations; but, being once raised together with him, the Accuser of the Brethren shall then be cast down, to where the Beast and false Prophets are: So that he shall no more disturb their Peace, but they shall for ever dwell in the Presence of
God

God and the Lamb. But again, a Christian's Life is often a Life of Fears ; which are often an Hinderance to the Exercise of Faith ; and many Times causes great Confusion in the Soul : Sometimes a poor weary Soul is tossed with disputing its Filiation : Being tempted to question, whether it be a Son of God, yea or no : But, stay Soul, this is no certain Ground for thee to conclude thou art not a Son of God, because thou art exercised with Temptation ; for, he that was the only begotten Son of God, was himself attacked on this Head ; and like a valiant Champion, engaged the Enemy with the two-edged Sword of the Word of God ; and by this Means, made a Way for all his Followers to be brought off more than Conquerors ; that their Fears might all be banished, and Faith be turned into Sight-Fruition, and full Enjoyment ; *Forasmuch as the Children were Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he also himself likewise took Part of the same ; that through Death he might destroy him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil ; and deliver them, who through Fear of Death, were, all their Life-time subject to Bondage, Heb. ii. 14, 15.* So that Death to them that die in Christ, is an End of all their Fears of what Kind soever : Have they often been tossed with Fears they were not Sons ? Death shall put an End to this, when he who died for them shall say : This my Son was dead, and is alive ; was lost, and is found ; and will receive him with the greatest Joy.

Again, they are often tossed with Fears, lest their Imperfections should hinder their Entrance into everlasting Glory : But Death will put an End to this Fear, when they shall be brought Home to their Father's House, and shall eternally be employed in giving Thanks to God and the Father ; which hath made them meet, to be Partakers of an Inheritance with the Saints in Light, Col. i. 12. Thus Death, to them that die in Christ, is an End of all their Fears.

But

But again, it will likewise put an End to all their Labours: As is expressed in the Text, *They rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.* While here, they are often labouring under the Burden of a guilty Conscience; but then, they shall enjoy perfect Peace, and an eternal Calmness and Serenity of Soul, and that for evermore. Again, while here, they are often labouring under the Hidings of God's Face, but when Death hath done its Office, it will put an End to their Labour and Trouble of this Kind; for then, they shall see him Face to Face; and when they shall thus see him, they shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is; and by the same Image be changed from Glory to Glory. Here they are exposed to many To's and Fro's, Up's and Down's, many Times almost wearied out of all Comforts in Life, with Labours of various Kinds: But then, an End will be put to them all, when he, who once suffered for them, shall say to them, Come, sit with me on my Throne; for I have overcome for you, and am set down with my Father on his Throne.

But again, while here, they are often labouring under Slander and Reproach; but he left them a comforting Cordial against this Kind of Labour, before he left the World, to serve as an Antidote to support them under all the Reproach that should be cast upon them in his Absence, *John xvi. 33. In the World ye shall have Tribulation; but be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World.* And now, labouring Soul, come inherit the Kingdom prepared for thee from the Foundation of the World.

But again, In short, whatever their Sorrows are, Death will put an End to them all, on the Account of those that die in Christ. Have they been exercised with Sorrows from the Enemy without, even a cunning Devil, or the Enemy within, a deceitful Heart? Nay, Have their Sorrows been about Things of Time, or Things of Eternity? There shall be an End of

them all; for the Things of Time shall all be done away, which was their Grief while here; and the Things of Eternity, a Want of which caused much Sorrow while here, shall then be fully enjoyed by all those that die in Christ; and the Fullness of Joy they shall then be in, will put a final End to all their Sorrow of what Kind soever: So that, though they have sown in Tears, they shall reap in Joy: While here, they went out weeping, but they shall leave all their Sorrows behind them, and come home rejoicing, bringing their Sheaves with them, and they shall then feed on rich redeeming Love and Grace, to a never-ending Eternity.

Thus Death, to them that die in Christ, is an End of all their Sorrow; when Death shall be swallowed up in Victory, they shall then be swallowed up in the full Enjoyment of endless Felicity: Then their Sorrows shall be turned into Songs, and their short, though sharp Complaints, into everlasting Praises, to him that so loved them, as to wash them from their Sins in his own Blood; that he might present them to his Father, a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing. Here is this then, for the Comfort of those that are mourning under various Trials, that though they are sharp, they are but short, on account of those that are in Christ, *Psal. xxx. 5. Weeping may endure for a Night, but Joy cometh in the Morning.* From which, note, that the very Moment their Sorrows end, their Joy begins: Thus Joy, as it were, takes Sorrow by the Heel; ushering them from a World of Sorrow, into those everlasting Mansions of Glory he hath prepared for them that he brings out of great Tribulation, that their Joy may be full; and thus, as it were, put a final End to all their Sorrows; they have Bread to eat that the World knows not of, and Joys that Strangers intermeddle not with, and no Man shall take away their Crown: For God their righteous Judge will set it on their Head at the last Day, and

and none shall take it off again; for his Gifts and Callings are without Repentance, *For having loved his own, that were in the World, he loved them to the End,* John xiii. 1. So that while they are crying, he is caring for them, and will put their Tears in his Bottle; for his Eye is open to behold the Righteous, and his Ear to hear their Cry. What though their Afflictions are many, the Lord will deliver them out of them all, and then will their Sorrows for ever be at an End, and they shall enter into the Joy of their Lord: The wicked then shall cease from troubling, and their weary Souls shall pass through the Gates of Death, into the full Enjoyment of endless Life; which will consist in a perfect Freedom from all Sorrow and Suffering for evermore.

Fourthly, Wherein their Blessedness consists that die in Christ.

And First, Their Blessedness consists, in a being made Partaker of, and safely settled in, the full, free, and everlasting Enjoyment of that Love, which was from all Eternity engaged in choosing them in Christ Jesus to everlasting Glory and Happiness; which Love is made manifest in Time, in their Calling and Conversion, as the Means which God hath appointed, to make them meet for the Enjoyment of that Glory he hath prepared for, and will confer upon, all those that die in Christ. And Oh! What a Blessing will it be, to swim in, and, as it were, be swallowed up, in those Raptures of Joy and endless Felicity, which floats so freely in the Ocean of everlasting Love; which Love, was engaged on the Behalf of lost Sinners, before Man or Angels were brought into Being: And though this Love passed by Angels, and pitched upon a Remnant of *Adam's* Race, who, as they came out of the Hand of God, were the Glory of all his Workmanship, in the first Creation; yet he did not choose them, or set his Love upon them, neither for any created Excel-

lency that was then in them, nor for any Thing that should afterward be done by them; neither did this Love engage in choosing them to Salvation, without considering them as Persons standing in Need of it, and of Sanctification of the Spirit and Belief of the Truth, as the Means to make them meet for that Glory they were chosen to, 2d Epist. to *Thess.* ii. 13. *We are bound to give Thanks unto God always for you, Brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth.* All which Blessings peculiarly belong to them that die in Christ.

But again, Secondly, Their Blessedness consists in this, that the very same Love which was engaged before Time in choosing them, was made manifest in Time, in sending Christ to die for them, *John* iii. 16. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* From which, note, God hath so blessed them, as to send his Son to die for them, and by dying, he hath freed them from Death, so as that though it may fright them, it cannot hurt them, for Christ hath taken away the Sting of Death, and by so doing hath opened a Door into everlasting Life; having himself taken Possession of that everlasting Inheritance, and stands ready to bid a hearty Welcome to all those that die in him, with a *Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World;* wherefore now, come enter into the Joy of your Lord.

But again, Thirdly, Their Blessedness consists in this, that they have a proper Right to that Inheritance, by Vertue of their Relation to Christ, *Revel.* xxii. 14. *That they may have Right to the Tree of Life, that stands in the Midst of the Paradise of God:* And it is their Marriage Relation to Christ that makes their Title good to the Inheritance; and not only so, but he will bring them home to himself, that where he is they may be to behold

behold his Glory ; for it is his Will they should be with him, and his Work to bring them home to himself. Oh ! what a Blessing is it to have Almighty Power employed in effecting what infinite Wisdom contrived, and everlasting Love fixed upon, as the Means by which, they that are Christ's shall be brought home to sit down with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* in the Kingdom of their Father, where they, who while in this Vale of Tears, were but as Heirs under Age, shall then be blessed of God, so as to be owned as Heirs of God, and Joint Heirs with Christ, of an Inheritance which can never fade away.

But again, Fourthly, Their Blessedness consists in this, that the Spirit beareth Witness to the Truth of their Relation to Christ, for the Spirit itself beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God, and Heirs together with Christ, of the same Grace of Life, saying, ye are dead, and your Life is hid with Christ in God; but when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in Glory : And that Spirit that is the Witnessing, is likewise the Sealing Spirit ; after ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, and they likewise have their Portion sealed over to them, *Luke xii. 32. Fear not little Flock, it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom :* And he hath made it over to them under his own Hand and Seal, and intrusted it in the Hand of Christ for them, who is the Mediator of that better Covenant, established on better Promises ; in which Covenant he hath made Provision for them, both for Time and Eternity, that they may have a Right to the Inheritance, and be safely brought to the Enjoyment of it.

But again, Fifthly, Their Blessedness consists in this, that they are freely justified from all Things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses, *Acts xiii. 39. :* For he in whom they die hath once lived for them, and his Life was a perfect Conformity

ty to that righteous Law which they had broken, and by so breaking the Law, had laid themselves under the Curse and Condemnation of that Law, and must for ever have perished in that State, had not Christ undertaken for them, and fulfilled the Law for them; and by his Obedience thereto, perfectly freed them from that Curse, which was due unto them, now their Justification is two-fold, a Justification in the Sight of God, and a Justification in the Court of Conscience: And here lies all their Comfort, that both are the Work of him that once died for them; for by that Righteousness which he wrought out without them, imputed to, and put upon them, are they justified in the Sight of God, *Isa. xlv. 25. In the Lord shall all the Seed of Israel be justified, and shall Glory;* and by the Application of that Righteousness to the Soul, are they justified in the Court of Conscience, *Rom. v. 1. Therefore being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* From which, note, that one chief Part of their Blessedness is this, that they always stand justified in the Sight of God, in the Righteousness of Christ; *For he hath not beheld Iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen Perverseness in Israel, Numb. xxiii. 21.* From which it appears, that they are justified in the Sight of God while Sinners in themselves, and then by receiving this Righteousness as theirs in the Way of believing, they are justified in their own Consciences, which is the Scripture Doctrine of Justification by Faith; both which are the Work of him who is God-Man, which makes Justification in both its Parts to be entirely of free rich Grace, *Rom. iii. 24. Being justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ:* And this makes them blessed both in Life and Death, that by their being clothed in this Righteousness of Christ, they are free both in the Sight of Law and Justice; and thus dying in Jesus, shall be eternally glorified together with him; who, by his Righteousness being put upon them, hath made them free

free Citizens of the *New Jerusalem*. And now, who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifieth, who can condemn: Thus are they compleatly blessed that die in Christ.

Again, Sixthly, Their Blessedness consists in this, that all their Sins, of what Kind soever, are freely and absolutely pardoned, *Isa. xliii. 25. I, even I am he that blotteb out thy Transgressions for my own Sake, and will not remember thy Sins.* From which, observe, that the same Grace, according to which they are justified, is likewise magnified in pardoning their Transgressions; but with this Difference, by the Righteousness of Christ being put upon them, and made theirs, they are looked upon, and accepted of, as perfectly just as if they had never offended: But by Grace, they who really are, and always were in themselves Sinners, are freely forgiven their Sins for Christ's Sake, in whom they have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of their Sins.

Again, Seventhly, They are blessed, in that, when Death comes to execute its Office, he that died for them will be their Companion through that dark and gloomy Vale, *Psal. xxiii. 4. When I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me:* And the Presence of Christ makes Death rather desirable than dreadful, which appears in the Case of old Simeon, who, when he came into the Temple, and beheld the Child Jesus, he took him up in his Arms, saying, *Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace according to thy Word, for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation, which thou hast prepared before the Face of all People:* And, Oh! what a Blessing is it to leave the World, with Christ inclosed in the Arms of Faith and Love, as the Effect of being embraced in the Arms of his everlasting Love, before the Foundation of the World; who, that he might make known the Riches of that Love, took upon him a Body of the same Nature, and therewithal their Sin;

Sin; and by so doing, took away the Sting of Death, which is Sin, that he might make them a safe and easy Passage through that dark and gloomy Vale, to those peaceful Regions of everlasting Glory and Felicity, where they shall be ever with him, to behold the Brightness of his Face for evermore.

But again, Eighthly, They are blessed, in being by him taken into the Royal Family of King Jesus, and are furnished with a Guard, every way suited to their Circumstance and Station; for as they are the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, he hath such Care over them, that he sends a Life-Guard of Angels to attend them, *Psal. xxxiv. 7. The Angels of the Lord encamp round about them that fear him:* And as they are thus gloriously attended in Life by Angels, so are they likewise defended by them, for all the Hosts of Heaven must be employed, rather than one of his must be hurt, *Psal. xci. 11. For he shall give his Angels Charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy Ways.* Thus are they that are in Christ blessed, in that, they are both kept and accompanied by Angels; but yet they shall be made Partakers of higher Blessings, for at the last Day they shall be gathered home by Angels, *Matt. xxiv. 31. And he shall send his Angels with a great Sound of a Trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the four Winds, and from the one End of the Heavens unto the other.* So that it appears they are the Objects of his Love, whatever Circumstance they may be in in this Life.

But again, see what a Charge he gives concerning them, *Matt. viii. 10. See that ye despise not one of these Little Ones: For I say unto you, that in Heaven, their Angels always behold the Face of my Father, which is in Heaven;* as it were, to give him Intelligence, how wicked Men deride and despise them; but he is still so tender over them, that what is done to them, he looks upon it as done to himself. Thus are they blessed, both in Life and Death, that are in Christ.

But

But again, at last they shall be blessed compleatly, when they shall be brought to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, whose Names are written in Heaven, and their Persons shall all be brought thither; and they shall be welcomed Home, with a Come you that have been tossed with Tempests and not comforted, you who have come through, and are now come out of great Tribulation, come enter into the Joy of your Lord: And thus are they blessed that die in Jesus, with a Blessing that shall never wear out, but their Pleasure will be always fresh, and ever new.

Fifthly, How, and for what End their Works do follow them.

And First, Their Works go not before them, as the Cause of their Acceptance in the Sight of God, but they follow them, as Evidences of their Love to him, *John xiv. 15. If ye love me, keep my Commandments;* for in the keeping of his Commandments there is a great Reward.

But again, their Works follow them, as Evidences of the Truth of their Faith, *James ii. 26. As a Body without a Spirit is dead, so Faith without Works is dead also:* Wherefore they that are in Christ, are blessed with that Faith that worketh by Love, and purifieth the Heart.

But again, their Works follow them, as the Effect of the Holy Spirit working in them; whose Work alone it is, to make them meet to be Partakers of an Inheritance with the Saints in Light.

But again, their Works follow them, to testify their Obedience to the revealed Will of God, *Titus iii. 8. These Things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, be careful to maintain good Works: For these Things are good and profitable unto Men.* Thus they that die in Christ, have their Works to follow them, as Evidences of their Love both to God and Man.

But again, It is by these Works wrought in them, by the holy Spirit working in them both to will and do of his own good Pleasure, that they are made meet to dwell with the Saints in Light; for without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord; and they who are made Partakers of those Works, which may be properly called good, even such as are performed from a Principle of Love to God, purely out of Obedience to his Will, shall never be forgotten; but be had in everlasting Remembrance. And thus, they that die in Christ, their Works do follow them.

But again, Their Works follow them, as a Testimony of their Fruitfulness, *Titus iii. 14. Let ours also learn to maintain good Works for necessary Uses, that they be not unfruitful*; which Fruitfulness, is the Effect of our being in Christ by spiritual Implantation, as the Spring of all our Comforts and Consolation.

Lastly, That our only Support under the Pains, and our Comfort against the Fears of Death, flows from our Union with Christ. And First, it is a great Support to a Soul under the Pains of a temporal Death, when, in the Exercise of Faith, it can look to that eternal Act of Choice, which God made in his Son before Man or Angel was made; and can there see, that those Sins which brought both Pain and Death upon the Body, were then, according to that eternal Purpose in Christ Jesus before the World began, laid upon Christ by the Hand of the heavenly Father; and by him carried into a Land of Forgetfulness, never to be remembered by him any more, nor rise up in Judgment against them, for whom Christ was made Sin, that they might be made the Righteousness of God in him: And by being thus made Righteous in his Righteousness, be made Partaker of all those Blessings pronounced by the Lord, and witnessed to by them, and shall be conferred on all those that die in Christ.

But again, Secondly, Our Union with Christ is our only Support to exercise Patience under our Pains; for as he endured the Cross with Patience, and despised the Shame attending it, when he suffered Death for us; seeing that our Sins were as the Nails and Spear that pierced those spotless Hands, inoffensive Feet, and undefiled Side and Heart, to Death on the Cross in our Stead, that he might make way for our free Access to a Crown of Glory, which God the righteous Judge, will give to all his at the last Day: A Sense of our Union with Christ as having borne those Sins, and the Curse that was due unto us which have brought temporal Death, and those Pains of Body, and Beatings of Heart, which are the certain Forerunners of an approaching Death: In such a Case, how should a Sense of our Union with Christ, support us with Patience, without complaining, to bear up under the Pains; especially when in the Exercise of Faith, we can look to him, that, by passing thro' the Gates of Death, Sampson-like hath taken away the Gates, Bar, and all; and so hath made an open Passage for us to follow him the same Way, thro' the Gates of a temporal Death, to a Crown of endless Life.

But again, Thirdly, Our Union with Christ is our only Support under the Pains of Death, in that, he hath drunk deep of that bitter Cup, and hath a Fellow-feeling with them; *For in all their Afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence saved them,* Isa. lxiii. 9. And by his having encountered Death in his own Person, and by dying, hath given Death a mortal Wound; and then, as our glorious Conqueror, ascended up on our Behalf to the Father's Right Hand, having deprived Death of his Sting, and afterwards followed him to his dark and lonesome Den, and there disarmed him of his Power; and at last, broke open the Prison of the Grave: And thus having laid down his Life for his People, he took it up again in his People's Stead, whom Death had made

Captives; and finding him in Union with them as their Head, laid so close Hold of him, that as they were dead in Law, from whom Death received his Commission, it immediately laid him dead too! But he, whom Death made a Captive by divine Power, rose again as a glorious Conqueror, and those that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him; for he is ascended up on high, having led Captivity captive, and received Gifts for Men, even the Rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. And under this Consideration, Union with Christ, is a Believer's Support under the Pains of Death.

But again, in the Fourth Place, Our Union with Christ is our only Support under the Pains of Death in another Respect; and that is, that though these Pains are sharp, they are but short, 2d Epist. Cor. iv. 17. *For our light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.* What! Though the Pains of Death are so sharp as to kill the Body, yet they are but light in Comparison of what we deserve; for had not Christ taken us into Union with himself, and borne our Sins in his own Person upon the Tree, they would have sunk Body and Soul in Hell.

But again, by virtue of Union with Christ, the Pains of Death are made short as well as light, in Comparison of that Glory that shall be revealed, when we shall have passed thro' this narrow, though troublesome Sea; then Death shall be swallowed up in Victory; then will all Pain and Sorrow be at an End; and those heavy Groans, which are so frequent in dying Agonies, shall then be turned into Songs of Praise.

And Oh! how affecting were the dying Words of him, whose Death we are now commemorating; when his sorrowful Mother stood weeping, to see him in his dying Agonies, in whose Life, the Mother's Life seemed to be bound up; he said, "Mother, forbear weeping, it is better to go to praise God, than to
" be

“ be continued here in Pain : For I can say, that
 “ Christ hath taken me into Union with himself, and
 “ this is my Support under all my present Pains, that
 “ they will not be long : Weeping may endure for a
 “ Night, but Joy will come in the Morning. What !
 “ Tho’ the Night be dark and cloudy, the Morning
 “ will be clear and shining.”

Thus, Union with Christ is our Support under the Pains of Death, and nothing besides this can comfort against the Fears of Death ; for, Alas ! Death is many Times accompanied with various Kinds of Fears : In the first Place, How ready is the fleshly Part to conclude, when Death approaches with his pale Face, I shall now fall a Prey to the Jaws of the devouring Adversary, for now Death is near, and God seems to stand at a Distance, and now none careth for my Soul ; well, but Christ heareth their Cry, and saith, *Isa. xliii. 2. When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee ; the Floods shall not overflow thee :* What tho’ the Fears of Death come in like a Flood, yet the Presence of Christ can at once expel them all ; for when *Israel* were come out of *Egypt*, and were pursued by the *Egyptians*, and no Way of Escape appeared, there was a merciless Sea before them, and a merciless Host behind them, and nothing but Fears and Murmuring then took Place among the *Israelites* ; yet then, in the Mount of Straits, he that gave them Favour in the Eyes of the *Egyptians*, then appeared for their Help, and makes them an open and safe Passage through the Midst of the Sea, as on dry Ground.

And again, When they came to the Banks of *Jordan*, how wonderful did he magnify his Power, in bringing them thro’ on dry Ground, into the Possession of the Promised Land ; and it is his Presence that can stay the Current of our Fears, and afford solid Comfort in our Passage thro’ both the Pains and Fears of a temporal Death, *Psal. xxiii. 4. When I walk thro’*

thro' the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me. And this is the Believer's Comfort under all other Fears, that the Presence of God in Christ can at once silence and hush all his Fears, even when Death draws nigh, and the poor fearful Soul begins to draw Conclusions, That God is departed from it, and all Things seem to make against him; then, for God to say to that Soul, as he once said to disconsolate Israel, by the Prophet *Isa. xli. 10. Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right Hand of my Righteousness.* This alone can comfort against the Fears of Death.

But again, Doth the Devil, and a deceitful Heart, cause Fears from a Sense of thy own Deformity, Christ alone can salve this Sore, by making a Change with thee, taking thy Deformity upon him, and putting his Comeliness upon thee; and in that Robe, making thee perfectly holy in the Eye of infinite Justice: And tho' thou art complaining that thou art black, his Blood can make thee as white as Snow, 1. Epist. *John i. 7. And the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all Sin.* Nay, in a Word, whatever Kind of Fears thou art exercised with, Christ hath such Fulness in him, that when he appears, travelling in the greatness of his Strength, to vanquish and overcome the Enemies of thy Soul, his Presence can banish all thy Fears, and make the lame Man leap as an Hart, and the fearful Soul to sing of Mercy, and of Judgment; of Mercy, that he hath delivered the Soul from Death, and those Fears attending it; of Judgment, that he hath destroyed all its Enemies, and delivered the Soul from Death, the Eyes from Tears, the Heart from slavish Fears, and the Feet from falling, and faith, *John xiv. 19. Because I live, ye shall live also.* So that Union with the living Head is the only Comfort against the Fears of Death; for what can more support

Support a Soul under the Fears that attend our near Approaches to another World, than to have the Spirit to bear Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God? *Gal. iv. 6. And because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

Seeing then, that they that die in Christ have his Spirit in their Hearts while they live, this is their only Support or Comfort against the Fears of a Temporal Death; that that Spirit, which was promised as a Comforter before Christ left the World, is still answering the great End for which he was sent into the World; and that is, to take the Death of Christ, and shew it unto them that are in Christ, for their Comfort against the Fears of Death: And besides, What can so comfort a Soul under the near Approaches of a temporal Death, as a believing View of our Union with, and Interest in Christ? when a Soul, under either the Pains or Fears of Death, can look up to Christ with this Satisfaction of Soul, Yonder glorious exalted Head, is he, that was once crowned with Thorns by the Jews, and crucified without the Gates of Jerusalem, but is now sat down at the Right Hand of God; is he, that once died for me, and by dying, took away the Sting of Death, and by so doing, made a free and open Passage through that dark and gloomy Vale. So that tho' it may fright, it cannot hurt, for he hath destroyed Death, and him that had the Power of Death, that he might comfort all his redeemed Ones, under those various Fears that attend dying Agonies; and now stands open-armed to receive Home, and bid a hearty Welcome to all those that die in him, *Matt. xxv. 34. Then shall the King say to them on his Right Hand, Come, ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World:* From which it appears, that Union with Christ, is our only Support, under the Pains of a temporal Death; and nothing short of this
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can afford any solid Comfort against the Fears of Death.

But again, The sensible Enjoyment of the Presence of Christ, as our Surety, that entered into Covenant-Engagement with his Father before Time, and according to that Covenant Transaction in Time, appeared on our Behalf as our Undertaker; and having fulfilled all the Demands of the Law in our Stead, and by his Obedience to the Law, hath freed us from the Curse of the Law, by being made a Curse for us; that we being delivered from Wrath through him, might follow him through the Gates of a temporal Death, with Chearfulness; knowing, that he hath took away the Sting of Death, which is Sin, and the Strength of Sin, which is the Law, and hath thus disarmed all the Enemies of them that die in him; and hath made a free, safe, and open Passage for them, from a World of Trouble, to a Kingdom of Peace and everlasting Rest, where the Wicked shall cease from troubling, their Fears and Pains be all at an End, and their Souls made to rejoice in the Presence of God and the Lamb for evermore.

But again, a Soul-reviving View of the glorious Company they are going to, and the proper Right they have to that Glory and Felicity, by virtue of their Relation to Christ, is another Means for their Comfort and Support under the Pains, and to strengthen against the Fears of Death. Well may the believing Soul say, I now find what *Paul* experienced, that without are Fightings, within are Fears; but lo! Yonder stands my glorious Leader, cloathed with Love to me, and that he might make known this his unchangeable Love, he took my Nature upon him, and in so doing, took me into Union with him; and as my Head and Husband, hath taken Possession of that eternal Inheritance, and now is set down with his Father on his Throne, as the First-born of every Creature, and is there *from henceforth expecting till his Enemies*

Enemies be made his Footstool: For by one Offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, Heb. xii. 13, 14. And now, in order that they may be comforted against the Fears of Death, saith, Heb. xii. 22. Ye are come unto Mount Sion and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels: To the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, whose Names are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of Just Men made perfect: And to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant.

And Oh! What a joyful Day will that be, when those that die in Christ, shall thus be brought Home; then their Sighs shall be turned into Songs, and their Complaints into everlasting Praises, their Fear shall then be at an End, and Faith shall be turned into Sight-Fruition and full Enjoyment; when they shall for ever swim, as it were, in the unfathomable Depth of everlasting Love, in its full Perfection, which Love for ever casteth out Fear; and then to their everlasting Joy, shall they see Jesus as he is, and when they shall see him, they shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is, and by the same Image be changed from Glory to Glory; and shall, to Eternity, be employed in praising him, who once died to redeem them, and hath both made them meet for, and brought them to, the full Possession of that everlasting Kingdom of Glory, there to live and reign for ever and ever. Thus our Union with Christ, is our only Support under the Pains of Death, and our Comfort against the Fears that so often attend a frail, troublesome Passage thro' this waste, howling Wilderness; through which, our Way lies to our Father's House; for it will be in vain for us to expect to go any other Way than our Lord and Master himself went, for he went by the Cross to the Crown, and all that are his Followers may expect to go Home the same Way; for he that will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, take up his Cross, and

follow me; and they that follow him in his own Way, shall at the End of the Way, receive the End of their Faith, even the Salvation of their Souls: When they shall for ever sit down with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, in the Kingdom of their Father; then will the Blessing pronounced in the Text, be fully Accomplished on the Account of those that die in Jesus; for *they shall rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them*: As it is said of *Cornelius*, Acts x. 4. *Thy Prayers and thine Alms, are come up for a Memorial before me*: Not as the Cause of God's Love to him, but as the Effect of God's Love in him, which was shed abroad in his Heart, and manifested itself in his Conversation both towards God and Man.

Thus, they that die in Jesus, however they may be slandered and reproached, tossed with Tempests and not comforted, pressed with Temptation without, and in-dwelling Corruption within, all which causeth much Exercise, while short of the promised Rest; yet when once landed safe on the Borders of the Heavenly Canaan, their Fears and Sins will all be left behind; as we have good Hope, through Grace, that he whose Death we are now commemorating, is now got out of the Gun-shot of the Enemy, having left all his Pains, Sins, and Fears behind; and is now swallowed up in the full Enjoyment of God and the Lamb; and that for evermore: Where he is for ever, as it were, swallowed up in the free, full, and everlasting Enjoyment of the Eternal Three in One; while those of his surviving Friends and Relations are yet left behind, he is now entered into the Joy of his Lord; while they are complaining for Want of the gracious Presence of God, and mourning the Loss of so agreeable a Companion, he is for ever rejoicing in the full Enjoyment of the glorious Presence of God, being now made a meet Companion for Angels and glorified Saints; he being now ranked among those innumerable Hosts of glorified Ones, who came out of
great

great Tribulation, and have washed their Robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb; being now fully possess'd of those Blessings pronounced in the Text, in that he is now *resting from his Labours*, and tho' his Goodness extendeth not to the Lord, so as to procure any Favour at his Hand; yet those Works, which are perfum'd by the Merits of Christ, now follow him as the Evidences of his Love to God; and to shew forth the Delight he had in God's Ways; which were to him Ways of Pleasantness: As all that were acquainted with him, cannot but acknowledge, in that considering his Age and Circumstance, he was singular for Piety and Virtue, and was clear in his Judgment as to the solid Truths of the Gospel: And likewise in his Conduct he was very becoming, both in his Duty towards God, his Parents, and his Fellow-Creatures.

From which I infer, First, that we that are yet alive and remain, as far as in us lies, should imitate those that are gone before us, in following them so far, as they have been Followers of Christ, First Epist. to Cor. xi. 1. *Be ye Followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*. From which we may learn this Lesson: To follow all Men so far as they follow Christ; but, by no means, to follow any Man, neither for Fear of Frowns, nor with Regard to Favour, when they step out of God's Way; for it will be no Pledge for thee at the last Day, that thou went out of the Way, because of the Company of Such-an-one that was a near Relation, or one thou expected some great Favour from; No, thou that pretendest to be a Follower of Christ, had need to take the Word of *Moses* along with thee, Ex. xxiii. 2. *Thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do Evil*. From which observe, that it is better to follow Christ alone, than to go in Company with all the World, in the broad Way that leads to everlasting Destruction; for Christ leads all his Home to his Father's House. But some may be ready to say, but

how must we follow Christ? I answer, to follow Christ aright, is to follow him in the Exercise of every Grace, and in the Discharge of every Duty. And First, they follow him in the Exercise of Faith, by taking him upon his Word, and then looking to him as a faithful God, who will not go back with, nor fail in the Accomplishment of what he hath declared in his Word, *Gen. xxviii. 16. I will never leave thee, till I have done what I have spoken to thee of*: Wherefore, if at any Time, he hath ever made Use of his Word of Grace, in the Promise for thy Support under, and as a Means to remove thy Troubles from off thy Soul, it then behoves thee, to act Faith on him, who, in his two Natures, is the only Object on which Faith fixes: And now, thou having a Right to put him upon his Word, with a *Lord, do as thou hast said*; still trusting in him alone for a whole Salvation, having his Word for thy Rule, and his Spirit for thy Guide, in thy following of him.

But, Secondly, to follow him in Love, is, to love him above all Things, and out of Love to him, to perform Obedience to his Will in all Things, according to Christ's own Words, *John xiv. 15. If ye love me, keep my Commandments*. Now, where there is Love to him, there will be a longing to be like him in all Things, and a striving to tread in his Steps, in a constant Conformity to his Will in every Respect.

And then, Thirdly, they follow him in Humility; for as he was meek and lowly in Heart, so they that follow him, they learn this Lesson of him, and for their Encouragement he saith, *They shall find Rest unto their Souls*, *Matt. xi. 29*. And yet further, the humble Soul is his Abode, where he delights to dwell, and he will never repent his Choice, for he giveth Grace to the Humble.

But again, they follow him in Patience, and Patience teacheth Experience, and Experience of former Favours sometimes serves as a Spur to prompt forward
in

in following Christ. With such like Considerations as these, hath he left his Throne for me, and come down to die in my Stead; and having thus manifested his Love to me, shall I now neglect to follow him, because of some present Discouragements? No, surely, says the Soul, I will follow thee wheresoever thou goest. And thus they that follow him, follow him in the Exercise of every Grace.

And then again, they follow him in the Discharge of every Duty contained in the two Tables of the Law, wherein is contained their Duty both towards God and Man. But observe, they do not perform their Duty as mercenary Servants, for fear of Punishment, or in Hope of Reward; but purely from a Principle of Love to him, that hath fulfilled the Law for them, and hath imputed his Law-fulfilling Righteousness to them; in which Righteousness they stand in the Presence of the King, all fair and without a Spot.

Second Inference. As Death, to them that die in Christ, puts an End to all their Trouble and Sorrow, so there can be no real Comfort and Consolation in Life but what arises from, and centers in Christ, and comes to us thro' him; whereby our Union with Christ, in an everlasting Covenant, is manifested unto us under the sensible Enjoyment of this Relation to Christ; a true Believer, under all other Exercises, can still, in the lively Exercise of Faith, look up to Christ, the Object of Faith, and there, seeing its Union with him in an everlasting Covenant, it can then rejoice in him, under all the Trials and Temptations it may meet with, *Job xix. 25. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the last Day upon the Earth.* What tho' Temptations without, and indwelling Corruption within, vex my Soul, and cause much Grief, yet, when the Messenger Death comes to execute his Office, then all my Troubles and Trials will for ever be at an End; then the wicked One without will cease from troubling, for I shall be got out of his

his Reach ; and my troubled, weary, weather-beaten, and almost shipwreckt Soul shall then be landed safe on the Haven of everlasting Felicity, there for ever to dwell in the full, free, and everlasting Enjoyment of him, whom, while in this Tabernacle, I have but loved faintly, and served imperfectly ; but when once landed on *Mount Sion*, I shall then love him perfectly, and see him clearly, without a Glass between.

Third Inference. As none can die in Christ but those that live in him, how should the Thoughts of the near Approaches of Death and Judgment excite us to look to Christ, the Fountain from whence all our Blessings flow ? First, for a Righteousness to justify, for Grace to sanctify, and Power to support us under all our Trials and Temptations, that we may, through him, even in our greatest Exercises, be able to rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory : For those that are in Christ have Cause always to rejoice, had they but a Heart to it : With what Comfort then may a believing Soul look up, when Death comes and says, Yonder glorious exalted Head is he that once died for me, and by dying, took away the Sting of Death ; and now, Thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have a Right to all that Glory he is now in the Possession of. What tho' the Way be difficult, yet the End will be glorious ; though Death, like a rolling *Jordan* as yet is between me and the Kingdom, yet I have a sure Companion, who hath promised, and will not fail, to be my Fellow-traveller, thro' this rolling River, to yonder shining Orbs of everlasting Joy, where I shall for ever be with him, whom my Soul loves.

And, Oh ! How I long to be gone to my Father's House, where I shall for ever feed upon his everlasting Love, without End or Intermision, to a never-ending Eternity : As he whose Death occasioned this Discourse, who left these dusky Regions, to go to his
Father's

Father's House, in the Seventeenth Year of his Age; and about a Week before his Death, his tender Father accompanying him, shewed him a Passage concerning Faith; and when he had looked at it, he said, he depended on Christ alone for Salvation: And in the Morning before he died he was somewhat cast down, but immediately the Sun of Righteousness arose, and so refresh'd his Soul, that, Swan-like, he broke out into this Song of Praise,

*Oh! to mount, to mount away,
And leave this Clod of heavy Clay.*

And afterwards told his Parents, he knew the Time when he was convinced of his Sin; and likewise, that he could experience the Work of Sanctification; but he said he could not give so particular Account of his Graces Birth, but he was comfortably satisfied that the Sting of Death was taken away by the Death of Christ: And thus he fell asleep in Jesus, where he rests in Peace for evermore.

And now, to you that are the mourning Relations of the Deceased, you ought not to mourn, as those without Hope; for though you have lost an agreeable Companion, yet this may afford Comfort, that he is now entered into the Joy of his Lord; instead of weeping, you have Cause to rejoice. Under these Considerations, first, That he was but lent from the Lord, and that he had a Right to take him again when he pleased: Secondly, It is a Matter of Rejoicing to consider, that he hath taken him from the Evil to come; that being freed from Trouble and Pain, he may now for ever rest in his Love. Was his Company pleasant to you, yet the Lord saw it was meet to exalt him to far higher Company above; while here, he often felt griping Pains, which are often attended with Groans and Complaints,

plaints, but now he is employed in singing endless Praises to God and the Lamb, for the Wonders of his Love, in redeeming, saving, and sanctifying, and making him meet for that Glory he hath now put him into the full Possession of; he having now brought him to the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, whose Names are written in Heaven, who all, as with open Face, behold him in the Brightness of his Glory, and for ever dwell in his Presence.

And now, a Word to you young Persons that are yet in the Body: How needful is it for you to hearken to the wise Man's Advice, *Eccles. xii. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth.* Oh! how pleasant a Thing is it to see young Persons enquiring the Way to *Sion*, with their Faces thitherward. I would not garnish the Sepulchres of the Dead with Lawrels; but this I cannot omit saying in the Behalf of the Deceased, That he was singular in many Respects; First, in Obedience to his Parents in a most respectful Manner; Secondly, in his Carriage to all Men, considering his Age; and, Thirdly, in Zeal for the Glory of God and the Honour of the Gospel. From that little Acquaintance I had with him, I can say, I never saw his Equal; for, of my own Knowledge, when he heard Sermons preached, he so far laid them up in his Heart, as to retain both the Subject treated on, and all the Doctrines and Particulars raised from the Words; and, when he got home, committed them to Writing, that in his leisure Hours he might look them over again, for his better Edification.

Oh! that all young Persons would make this their common Practice, to acquaint themselves with him and be at Peace, and he hath promised that Good shall come unto them in waiting upon him; and there

there is none will truly wait upon him but those that live in him; and those are blessed while they live with fresh Supplies of spiritual Life, but much more when they die, *for they rest from their Labours, and their Works follow them*, as Evidences of their Love to him. How ought you and I to follow those that are gone before us, so far as they followed Christ; and that it may be thus, I leave what hath been said to Consideration.



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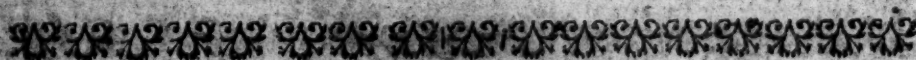


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